

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER:

A

LEGENDARY TALE.

IN TWO PARTS.



4
SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER,

A N D T H E

B L E E D I N G R O C K :

T W O L E G E N D A R Y T A L E S .

By Miss HANNAH MORE. *H*

The SECOND EDITION, corrected.

Of them who, wrapt in Earth so cold,
No more the smiling day shall view,
Shou'd many a tender tale be told,
For many a tender thought is due. LANGHORNE.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL, IN THE STRAND.

M D C C L X X V I I I .

SIR BILLY OF THE BOWER

AND THE

BLEEDING ROCK

TWO LEGENDARY TALES



W. H. MORSE

The Second Edition, corrected.

Of them who, when in Earth's coil,
To make the living soul
Stand away a while and rest,
For many a tender thought is due.

L O N D O N

Printed for T. CADELL, in the Strand.

MCCCLXXIV

T O
DAVID GARRICK, Esq.

S I R,

IT is scarcely possible that any one should entertain a more humble opinion of the following little Production, than she who presents it to you. It is a trifle which, she confesses, has but a very slender claim to your protection; but she considers that your Name will be an ornament to her Book, as your Friendship has been an honour to its Author.

Where merit is incontestible, and characters are decided by the concurring suffrage of mankind, praise becomes almost impertinent. It is absurd to be industrious in proving truths so self-evident, that no one ever thought of controverting them.

I may

D E D I C A T I O N.

I may be accused of advancing a startling proposition, when I declare that you are an enemy to the Muses; but if it be allowed that description and invention are the very soul of Poetry, I shall be justified by the world in general, who constantly behold you displaying talents which cannot be described, and exhibiting excellencies which leave nothing to be imagined.

Whatever reason I may find to regret my having ventured these little Poems into the world, I shall at least have no common pleasure in recollecting one circumstance attending them, since they furnish me with an occasion of assuring you with what esteem and admiration

I am, SIR,

Your most obedient,

and very humble Servant,

BRISTOL, Dec. 14, 1775.

HANNAH MORE.

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER,

A

LEGENDARY TALES.

PART I.

O nostra Vita, ch'e si bella in vista !

Com' perde agevolmente in un momento,

Quel, ch'en molt'anni a grand pena s'acquista !

PETRARCA.

THERE was a young, and valiant Knight,

SIR ELDRED was his name;

And never did a worthier wight

The rank of knighthood claim.

B

Where

E.

2 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

Where gliding *Tay*, her stream sends forth,
To feed the neighbouring wood,
The antient glory of the North,
Sir ELDRED's castle stood.

The youth was rich as youth might be
In patrimonial dower;
And many a noble feat had he
Atchieved, in hall, and bower.

He did not think, as some have thought,
Whom honour never crown'd,
The fame a father dearly bought,
Cou'd make the son renown'd.

He better thought, a noble fire,
Who gallant deeds had done,
To deeds of hardihood shou'd fire
A brave and gallant son.

The

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 3

The fairest ancestry on earth

Without desert is poor ;

And every deed of lofty worth

Is but a claim for more.

Sir ELDRED's heart was good and kind,

Alive to Pity's call ;

A crowd of virtues grac'd his mind,

He lov'd, and felt for all.

When *merit* rais'd the sufferer's name,

He show'r'd his bounty *then* ;

And those who cou'd not prove that claim,

He succour'd still as *men*.

But sacred truth the Muse compels

His errors to impart ;

And yet the muse, reluctant, tells

The fault of ELDRED's heart.

4 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

Tho' kind and gentle as the dove,

As free from guile and art,

And mild, and soft as infant love

The feelings of his heart;

Yet if the passions storm'd his soul,

By jealousy led on;

The whirlwind rage disdain'd controul,

And bore his virtues down.

Not Thule's waves so wildly break

To drown the northern shore;

Not Etna's entrails fiercer shake,

Or Scythia's tempests roar.

As when in summer's sweetest day,

To fan the fragrant morn,

The sighing breezes softly stray

O'er fields of ripen'd corn;

Sudden

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 5

Sudden the lightning's blast descends,

Deforms the ravag'd fields ;

At once the various ruin blends,

And all resistless yields.

But when, to clear his stormy breast,

The sun of reason shone,

And ebbing passions sunk to rest,

And shew'd what rage had done :

O then what anguish he betray'd !

His shame how deep, how true !

He view'd the waste his rage had made,

And shudder'd at the view.

The meek-ey'd dawn, in saffron robe,

Proclaim'd the opening day,

Up rose the sun to gild the globe,

And hail the new-born May ;

6 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

The birds their vernal notes repeat,
And glad the thick'ning grove,
And feather'd partners fondly greet
With many a song of love ;

When pious ELDRED walk'd abroad
His morning vows to pay,
And hail the univerfal Lord
Who gave the goodly day,

That done—he left his woodland glade,
And journey'd far away ;
He lov'd to court the stranger shade,
And thro' the lone vale stray.

Within the bosom of a wood,
By circling hills embrac'd,
A little, modest mansion stood,
Built by the hand of Taste.

While

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 2 7

While many a prouder castle fell,

This, safely did endure;

The house where guardian virtues dwell

Is sacred, and secure.

Of Eglantine an humble fence

Around the mansion stood,

Which charm'd at once the ravish'd sense,

And screen'd an infant wood.

The wood receiv'd an added grace,

As pleas'd it bent to look,

And view'd its ever verdant face

Reflected in a brook.

The smallness of the stream did well

The master's fortunes shew;

But little streams may serve to tell

From what a source they flow.

While

This

8 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER:

This mansion own'd an aged Knight,

And such a man was he,

As heaven just shews to human sight,

To tell what man shou'd be:

His youth in many a well-fought field

Was train'd betimes to war;

His bosom, like a well-worn shield,

Was grac'd with many a scar:

The vigour of a green old age

His reverend form did bear;

And yet, alas! the warrior-sage

Had drain'd the dregs of care:

And sorrow more than age can break,

And wound its hapless prey;

'Twas sorrow-furrow'd his firm cheek,

And turn'd his bright locks grey.

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 9

One darling daughter sooth'd his cares,

A young and beauteous dame ;

Sole comfort of his failing years,

And BIRTHA was her name.

Her heart a little sacred shrine,

Where all the Virtues meet ;

And holy Hope, and Faith divine,

Had claim'd it for their seat.

She rear'd a fair and fragrant bower

Of wild and rustic taste,

And there she screen'd each fav'rite flower

From every ruder blast.

And not a shrub or plant was there

But did some moral yield ;

For wisdom, by a father's care,

Was found in every field.

10 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

The trees, whose foliage fell away,

And with the summer died,

He thought an image of decay

Might lecture human pride.

While fair, perennial greens that stood,

And brav'd the wintry blast,

As types of the fair mind he view'd

Which shall for ever last.

He taught her that the gaudiest flowers

Were seldom fragrant found,

But wasted soon their little powers,

Lay useless on the ground :

While the sweet-scented rose shall last,

And boast its fragrant power,

When life's imperfect day is past,

And beauty's shorter hour.

And

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 11

And here the virgin lov'd to lead

Her inoffensive day,

And here she oft retir'd to read,

And oft retir'd to pray.

Embower'd she grac'd the woodland shades,

From courts and cities far,

The pride of Caledonian maids,

The peerless northern star.

As shines that bright and blazing star,

The glory of the night,

When sailing thro' the cloudless air,

She sheds her silver light :

So BIRTHA shone !—But when she spoke

The Muse herself was heard,

As on the ravish'd air she broke,

And thus her prayer preferr'd :

12 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

" O blefs thy BIRTHA, Power Supreme,

" In whom I live and move,

" And blefs me moft by bleffing him

" Whom more than life I love."

She starts to hear a ftanger's voice,

And with a modeft grace

She lifts her meek eye in furprize,

And fees a ftanger face.

The ftanger loft in tranfport flood,

Bereft of voice and power,

While ſhe with equal wonder view'd,

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

The virgin bluſh which ſpreads her cheek,

With Nature's pureſt dye,

And all thoſe dazzling beams which break,

Like Morning, from her eye.

He

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 13

He view'd them all, and as he view'd

Drank deeply of delight;

And still his raptur'd eye pursued,

And feasted on the sight.

With silent wonder long they gaz'd,

And neither silence broke;

At length the smother'd passion blaz'd,

Enamour'd ELDRED spoke:

“ O sacred Virtue, heav'nly power!

“ Thy wondrous force I feel;

“ I gaze, I tremble, I adore,

“ Yet die my love to tell.

“ My scorn has oft the dart repell'd

“ Which guileful beauty threw,

“ But goodness heard, and grace beheld,

“ Must every heart subdue.”

He

Quick

14 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

Quick on the ground her eyes were cast;

And now as quickly rais'd:—

Her father haply that way past,

On whom she trembling gaz'd.

Good ARDOLPH's eye his BIRTHA meets

With glances of delight;

And thus with courteous speech he greets

The young and graceful Knight:

“O gallant Youth, whoe'er thou art;

“Thou art welcome to this place;

“There's something rises at my heart

“Which says I've seen that face.”

“Thou gen'rous Knight,” the youth rejoin'd;

“Tho' little known to fame,

“I trust I bear a grateful mind—

“SIR ELDRED is my name.

“Sir

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 15

“SIR ELDRED?”—ARDOLPH loud exclaim’d,

“Renown’d for worth and power?

“For valour and for virtue fam’d,

“SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER?

“Now make me grateful, righteous Heaven,

“As thou art good to me,

“Since to my aged eyes ’tis given

“SIR ELDRED’s son to see!”

Then ARDOLPH caught him by the hand,

And gaz’d upon his face,

And to his aged bosom strain’d,

With many a kind embrace.

Again he view’d him o’er and o’er,

And doubted still the truth,

And ask’d what he had ask’d before,

Then thus address the Youth:

“Come

16 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

" Come now beneath my roof, I pray,

" Some needful rest to take,

" And with us many a cheerful day

" Thy friendly sojourn make."

He enter'd at the gate straightway

Some needful rest to take;

And with them many a cheerful day

Did friendly sojourn make.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

PART

P A R T II.

ONCE—'twas upon a summer's walk;
 The gaudy day was fled;
 They cheated Time with cheerful talk,
 When thus Sir ARDOLPH said:

“ Thy father was the firmest friend

“ That e'er my being blest;

“ And every virtue Heaven could send,

“ Fast bound him to my breast.

“ Together did we learn to bear

“ The casque and ample shield;

“ Together learn'd in many a war,

“ The deathful spear to wield.”

D

“ To

18 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

“ To make our union still more dear,

“ We both were doom'd to prove

“ What is most sweet and most severe

“ In heart-dissolving love.

“ The daughter of a neighbouring Knight

“ Did *my* fond heart engage ;

“ And ne'er did Heav'n the virtues write

“ Upon a fairer page.

“ *His* bosom felt an equal wound,

“ Nor sigh'd we long in vain ;

“ One summer's fun beheld us bound

“ In Hymen's holy chain.

“ Thou wast Sir ELDRED's only child,

“ Thy father's darling joy ;

“ On me a lovely daughter smil'd,

“ On me a blooming boy.

“ But

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 19

- " But man has woes, has clouds of care,
" That dim his star of life —
" My arms receiv'd the little pair,
" The earth's cold breast, my wife.

" Forgive, thou gentle Knight, forgive,
" Fond foolish tears will flow ;
" One day like mine thy heart may heave,
" And mourn its lot of woe,

" But grant, kind Heaven ! thou ne'er may'st know
" The pangs I now impart ;
" Nor ever feel the deadly blow
" That rives a husband's heart.

" Beside the blooming banks of *Tay*,
" My angel's ashes sleep ;
" And wherefore should her *ARDOLPH* stay,
" Except to watch and weep ?

26 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

" I bore my beauteous babes away

" With many a gushing tear,

" I left the blooming banks of *Tay*,

" And brought my darlings here,

" I watch'd my little household cares,

" And form'd their growing youth ;

" And fondly train'd their infant years

" To love and cherish truth."

" Thy blooming *BIRTHA* here I see,"

Sir ELDRED strait rejoin'd ;

" But why thy son is not with thee,

" Resolve my doubting mind."

When *BIRTHA* did the question hear,

She sigh'd, but could not speak ;

And many a soft and silent tear

Stray'd down her damask cheek.

Then

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 21

Then pass'd o'er good Sir ARDOLPH's face,

A cast of deadly pale ;

But soon compos'd, with manly grace

He thus renew'd his tale ;

“ For him my heart too much has bled,

“ For him, my darling son,

“ Has sorrow prest my hoary head ;

“ But Heav'n's high will be done !

“ Scarce eighteen winters had revolv'd,

“ To crown the circling year,

“ Before my valiant boy resolv'd

“ The warrior's lance to bear.

“ Too high I priz'd my native land,

“ Too dear his fame I held,

“ T' oppose a parent's stern command,

“ And keep him from the field.

“ He

22 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

" He left me—left his sister too,

" Yet tears bedew'd his face—

" What could a feeble old man do?—

" He burst from my embrace,

" O thirst of glory, fatal flame!

" O laurels dearly bought!

" Yet sweet is death when earn'd with fame—

" So virtuous Edwy thought,

" Full manfully the brave boy strove,

" Tho' pressing ranks oppose;

" But weak the strongest arm must prove

" Against an host of foes,

" A deadly wound my son receives;

" A spear affails his side:

" Grief does not kill—for ARDOLPH lives

" To tell that Edwy died.

" His

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 23

“ His long-lov’d mother died again

“ In EDWY’s parting groan ;

“ I wept for her, yet wept in vain—

“ I wept for both in one.

“ I wou’d have died—I fought to die ;

“ But Heaven restrain’d the thought,

“ And to my passion-clouded eye

“ My helpless BIRTHA brought.

“ When lo ! array’d in robes of light,

“ A nymph celestial came ;

“ She clear’d the mists that dimm’d my sight—

“ RELIGION was her name.

“ She prov’d the chastisement divine,

“ And bade me kiss the rod ;

“ She taught this rebel heart of mine

“ Submission to its God.

“ RELIGION

24 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER:

“ RELIGION taught me to sustain

“ What nature bade me feel ;

“ And piety reliev'd the pain

“ Which time can never heal.”

He ceas'd—with sorrow and delight

The tale Sir ELDRED hears,

Then weeping cries—“ Thou noble Knight,

“ For thanks accept my tears.

“ O ARDOLPH, might I dare aspire

“ To claim so bright a boon!—

“ Good old Sir ELDRED was my sire—

“ And thou hast lost a son.

“ And tho' I want a worthier plea

“ To urge so dear a cause ;

“ Yet, let me to thy bosom be

“ What once thy EDWY was.

“ My

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 23

“ My trembling tongue its aid denies ;

“ For thou may’st disapprove ;

“ Then read it in my ardent eyes,

“ Oh ! read the tale of love.

“ Thy beauteous BIRTHA !”——“ Gracious Power,

“ How cou’d I e’er repine,”

Cries ARDOLPH, “ since I see this hour ?

“ Yes——BIRTHA shall be thine.”

A little transient gleam of red

Shot faintly o’er her face,

And every trembling feature spread

With sweet disordered grace.

The tender father kindly smil’d

With fulness of content,

And fondly eyed his darling child,

Who, bashful, blush’d consent.

My

Unlike

E

O then

26 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

O then to paint the vast delight

That fill'd Sir ELDRED's heart,

To tell the transports of the Knight,

Wou'd mock the Muse's art.

But every kind and gracious soul,

Where gentle passions dwell,

Will better far conceive the whole,

Than any Muse can tell.

The more the Knight his BIRTHA knew,

The more he priz'd the maid ;

Some worth each day produced to view,

Some grace each hour betray'd.

The virgin too was fond to charm

The dear accomplish'd Youth ;

His single breast she strove to warm,

And crown'd, with love, his truth.

Unlike

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 27

Unlike the dames of modern days,
Who *general* homage claim,
Who court the *universal* gaze,
And pant for *public* fame.

Then Beauty but on merit smil'd,
Nor were her chaste smiles fold;
No venal father gave his child
For grandeur, or for gold.

The ardour of young ELDRED's flame
But ill cou'd brook delay,
And oft he press'd the maid to name
A speedy nuptial day.

The fond impatience of his breast
'Twas all in vain to hide,
But she his eager suit repress'd
With modest, maiden pride.

28 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

When oft Sir ELDRED press'd the day

Which was to crown his truth,

The thoughtful Sire would sigh, and say,

“ O happy state of youth !

“ It little recks the woes which wait

“ To scare its dreams of joy,

“ Nor thinks to-morrow's alter'd fate,

“ May all those dreams destroy.

“ And tho' the flatterer, Hope, deceives,

“ And painted prospects shews ;

“ Yet man, still cheated, still believes,

“ Till death the bright scene close.

“ So look'd my bride, so sweetly mild,

“ On me her beauty's slave ;

“ But whilst she look'd, and whilst she smil'd,

“ She sunk into the grave.

“ Yet,

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 29

" Yet, O forgive an old man's care,

" Forgive a father's zeal ;

" Who fondly loves must greatly fear,

" Who fears must greatly feel.

" Once more in soft and sacred bands

" Shall Love and Hymen meet ;

" To-morrow shall unite your hands,

" And——be your bliss complete !"

The rising sun inflam'd the sky,

The golden orient blush'd ;

But BIRTHA'S cheeks a sweeter die,

A brighter crimson flush'd.

The Priest, in milk-white vestments clad,

Perform'd the mystic rite ;

Love lit the hallow'd torch that led

To Hymen's chaste delight.

How

30 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

How feeble language were to speak

Th' immeasurable joy

That fir'd Sir ELDRED's ardent cheek,

And triumph'd in his eye!

Sir ARDOLPH's pleasure stood confest,

A pleasure all his own;

The guarded rapture of a breast

Which many a grief had known.

'Twas such a sober sense of joy

As Angels well might keep;

A joy chafis'd by piety,

A joy prepar'd to weep.

To recollect her scatter'd thoughts,

And shun the noon-tide hour,

The lovely bride in secret sought

The coolness of her Bower.

How

Long

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 31

Long she remain'd — th' enamour'd Knight,

Impatient at her stay,

And all unfit to taste delight,

When BIRTHA was away ;

Betakes him to the secret Bower ;

His footsteps softly move ;

Impell'd by every tender power,

He steals upon his love.

O, horror ! horror ! blasting sight !

He sees his BIRTHA's charms,

Reclin'd with melting, fond delight,

Within a stranger's arms.

Wild phrenzy fires his frantic hand,

Distracted at the sight,

He flies to where the lovers stand,

And stabs the stranger Knight.

“ Die,

32 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER?

"Die, traitor, die, thy guilty flames

"Demand th' avenging steel"—

"It is my brother, she exclaims,

"'Tis EDWY—Oh farewell!"

An aged peasant, EDWY's guide,

The good old ARDOLPH fought;

He told him that his bosom's pride,

His EDWY, he had brought.

O how the father's feelings melt!

How faint, and how revive!

Just so the Hebrew Patriarch felt,

To find his son alive.

"Let me behold my darling's face,

"And bless him ere I die!"

Then with a swift and vigorous pace,

He to the Bower did hie.

O-fad

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 33

O sad reverse!—Sunk on the ground

His slaughter'd son he view'd,

And dying BIRTHA close he found

In brother's blood imbru'd,

Cold, speechless, senseless, ELDRED near

Gaz'd on the deed he had done;

Like the blank statue of *Despair*,

Or *Madness* grav'd in stone.

The father saw—so Jephthah stood,

So turn'd his woe-fraught eye,

When the dear, destin'd child he view'd,

His zeal had doom'd to die.

He look'd the woe he could not speak,

And on the pale corse prest

His wan, discolour'd, dying cheek,

And silent, sunk to rest.

F

Then

34 SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER.

Then BIRTHA faintly rais'd her eye,——

Which long had ceas'd, to stream,
On ELDRED fix'd with many a sigh
Its dim, departing beam.

The cold, cold dews of hastening death
Upon her pale face stand;
And quick and short her failing breath,
And tremulous her hand.

The cold, cold dews of hastening death,
The dim, departing eye,
The quivering hand, the short quick breath
He view'd---and did not die.

He saw her spirit mount in air,
Its kindred skies to seek!
His heart its anguish could not bear,
And yet it wou'd not break.

The

SIR ELDRED OF THE BOWER. 35

The mournful Muse forbears to tell

How wretched ELDRED died :

She draws the Grecian * Painter's veil,

The vast distress to hide.



Yet Heaven's decrees are just, and wise,

And man is born to bear :

Joy is the portion of the skies,

Beneath them, all is care,

* In the celebrated Picture of the Sacrifice of Iphigenia, Timanthes having exhausted every image of grief in the by-standers, threw a veil over the face of the father, whose sorrow he was utterly unable to express. PLIN. Book xxxv.

THE END.

THE BIRD OF THE BOW

The beautiful Mole looks to tell

How wretched I have died:

She shows the Gaeian's Painter's veil

The vast church to hide

XXXXXX
XXXXXX

Yet Heaven's doctors are kind and wise

And man is born to bear

Joy is the portion of the wise

Beneath the sun all is care

In the end of the world of the world of the world
The end of the world of the world of the world
The end of the world of the world of the world
The end of the world of the world of the world

THE END

THE
BLEEDING ROCK,
A
LEGENDARY TALE.

—————The annual wound allur'd
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate,
In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis from his native Rock
Ran purple to the sea, suppos'd with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded.

MILTON.

THE
BLEEDING ROCK

LEGENDARY TALE

Of a thousand years ago,
Has people to the land, legend with blood,
While the moon shines from the name Rock
In legend shines all a legend's day,
The spirit dwells to lament its fate,
The ancient wound still is

MILTON

NO. THE BLEEDING ROCK.

THE
BLEEDING ROCK,

A
LEGENDARY TALE.

WHERE *beauteous Belmont* rears its modest brow
To view *Sabrina's* silver waves below,
Liv'd LINDAMIRA ; fair as Beauty's Queen,
The same sweet form, the same enchanting mien,
With all that softer elegance of mind
By genius heighten'd, and by taste refin'd.
Yet early was she doom'd the child of care,
For love, ill-fated love subdu'd the fair.

Ah !

40 THE BLEEDING ROCK.

Ah ! what avails each captivating grace,
 The form enchanting, or the finish'd face ?
 Or what, each beauty of the heav'n-born mind,
 The soul superior, or the taste refin'd ?
Beauty but serves destruction to insure,
 And *sense*, to feel the pang it cannot cure.
 Each neighb'ring youth aspir'd to gain her hand,
 And many a suitor came from many a land.
 But all in vain each neighb'ring youth aspir'd,
 And distant suitors all in vain admir'd.
 Averse to hear, yet fearful to offend,
 The lover she refus'd she made a friend :
 Her meek rejection wore so mild a face,
 More like acceptance seem'd it, than disgrace.

Young POLYDORE, the pride of rural swains,
 Was wont to visit *Belmont's* blooming plains.
 Who has not heard how POLYDORE cou'd throw
 Th' unerring dart to wound the flying doe ?

How

THE BLEEDING ROCK, 41

How leave the swiftest at the race behind,
 How mount the courser, and outstrip the wind?
 With melting sweetness, or with magic fire,
 Breathe the soft flute, or strike the louder lyre?
 From that fam'd lyre no vulgar musick sprung,
 The Graces tun'd it, and Apollo strung.

Apollo too was once a shepherd swain,
 And fed the flock, and grac'd the rustic plain.
 He taught what charms to rural life belong,
 The social sweetness, and the sylvan song;
 He taught, fair Wisdom in her grove to wooe,
 Her joys how precious, and her wants how few!
 The savage herds in mute attention stood,
 And ravish'd *Echo* fill'd the vocal wood;
 The sacred Sisters, stooping from their sphere,
 Forgot their golden harps, intent to hear.
 Till Heav'n the scene survey'd with jealous eyes,
 And Jove, in envy, call'd him to the skies.

42 THE BLEEDING ROCK.

Young POLYDORE was rich in large domains,
 In smiling pastures, and in flowery plains :
 With these, he boasted each exterior charm,
 To win the prudent, and the cold to warm ;
 To act the tenderness he never felt,
 In sorrow soften, and in anguish melt.
 The sigh elaborate, the fraudulent tear,
 The joy disssembled, and the well-feign'd fear,
 All these were his ; and his the treach'rous art
 That steals the guileless and unpractis'd heart.

Too soon he heard of LINDAMIRA's fame,
 'Twas each enamour'd Shepherd's fav'rite theme ;
 Return'd the rising, and the setting sun,
 The Shepherd's fav'rite theme was never done.
 They prais'd her wit, her worth, her shape, her air !
 And even inferior beauties thought her fair.

Such sweet perfection all his wonder mov'd ;
 He saw, admir'd, nay, fancied that he lov'd :

But

THE BLEEDING ROCK. 43

But POLYDORE no real passion knew,
Loft to all truth in feigning to be true.
No fense of tenderness could warm a heart,
Too proud to feel, too selfish to impart.

Cold as the fnows of *Rhodope* defcend,
And with the chilling waves of *Hebrus* blend;
So cold the breaft where *Vanity* prefides,
And mean Self-love the bofom-feelings guides.

Too well he knew to make his conqueft fure,
Win her foft heart, yet keep his own fecure.
So oft he told the well-imagin'd tale,
So oft he fwore---how fhould he *not* prevail?
Too unfufpecting not to be deceiv'd,
The well-imagin'd tale the nymph believ'd:
She lov'd the youth, fhe thought herfelf belov'd,
Nor blufh'd to praife whom every maid approv'd.
Alas! that youth, from LINDAMIRA far,
For newer conquefts wages cruel war;

44 THE BLEEDING ROCK.

With other nymphs on other plains he roams,
Where injur'd LINDAMIRA never comes;
Laughs at her easy faith, insults her woe,
Nor pities tears himself had taught to flow.

And now her eyes soft radiance seem'd to fail,
And now the crimson of her cheek grew pale;
The lily there, in faded beauty, shews
Its sickly empire o'er the vanquish'd rose.

Devouring sorrow marks her for his prey,
And slow and certain mines his silent way.
Yet, as apace her ebbing life declin'd,
Increasing strength sustain'd her firmer mind.

"O had my heart been hard as his," she cried,

"An hapless victim thus I had not died:

"If there be gods, and gods there surely are,

"Insulted virtue doubtless is their care.

"Then hasten, righteous Heaven! my tedious fate,

"Shorten my woes, and end my mortal date:

"Quick

L THE BLEEDING ROCK. 45

" Quick let your power transform this failing frame,

" Let me be any thing but what I am !

" And since the cruel woes I'm doom'd to feel,

" Proceed, alas ! from having lov'd too well ;

" Grant me some form where love can have no part,

" Nor human weakness reach my guarded heart.

" If pity has not left your blest abodes,

" Change me to flinty adamant, ye Gods ;

" To hardest rock, or monumental stone,

" Rather than let me know the pangs I've known :

" So shall I thus no farther torments prove,

" Nor taunting rivals say, ' she died for love.'

" For sure if aught can aggravate our fate,

" 'Tis scorn, or pity from the breast we hate."

She said,---the Gods accord the sad request ;

For when were pious pray'rs in vain address'd ?

Now, strange to tell ! if rural folks say true,

To harden'd Rock the stiffening damsel grew ;

No

46 THE BLEEDING ROCK.

No more her shapeless features can be known,
 Stone is her body, and her limbs are stone;
 The growing Rock invades her beauteous face,
 And quickly petrifies each living grace;
 The stone her stature nor her shape retains,
 The nymph is vanish'd, but the Rock remains.
 Yet wou'd her heart its vital spirits keep,
 And scorn to mingle with the marble heap.

When babbling Fame the fatal tidings bore,
 Grief seized the soul of perjur'd POLYDORE;
 Despair and horror robb'd his soul of rest,
 And deep compunction wrung his tortur'd breast.
 Then to the fatal spot in haste he hied,
 And plung'd a deadly poniard in his side:
 He bent his dying eyes upon the stone,
 And, "Take, sweet maid," he cried, "my parting
 groan."

Fainting, the steel he grasp'd, and as he fell,
 The weapon pierc'd the Rock he lov'd so well;

The

THE BLEEDING ROCK. 47

The guiltless steel assail'd the mortal part,
And stabb'd the vital, vulnerable heart,
The life-blood issuing from the wounded stone,
Blends with the crimson current of his own.
And tho' revolving ages since have past,
The meeting torrents undiminish'd last;
Still gushes out the sanguine stream amain,
The standing wonder of the stranger swain.

Now once a year, so rustic records tell,
When o'er the heath resounds the midnight bell;
On eve of Midsummer, that foe to sleep,
What time young maids their annual vigils keep,
The * tell-tale shrub fresh gather'd to declare
The swains who false, from those who constant are;
When ghosts in clanking chains the church-yard
walk,
And to the wondering ear of fancy talk:

* Midsummer-men, consulted as oracular by village maids.

When

48 THE BLEEDING ROCK.

When the scar'd maid steals trembling thro' the
grove,

To kiss the tomb of him who died for love :

When, with long watchings, *Care*, at length oppress'd,
Steals broken pauses of uncertain rest ;

Nay, *Grief* short snatches of repose can take,

And nothing but *Despair* is quite awake :

Then, at that hour, so still, so full of fear,

When all things horrible to thought appear,

Is perjur'd POLYDORE observ'd to rove

A ghastly spectre thro' the gloomy grove ;

Then to the Rock, the *Bleeding Rock* repair,

Where, sadly sighing, it dissolves to air.

Still when the hours of solemn rites return,

The village train in sad procession mourn ;

Pluck every weed which might the spot disgrace,

And plant the fairest field-flow'rs in their place.

Around no noxious plant, or floweret grows,

But the first daffodil, and earliest rose :

The

THE BLEEDING ROCK. 49

The snow-drop spreads its whitest bosom here,
And golden cowslips grace the vernal year;
Here the pale primrose takes a fairer hue,
And every violet boasts a brighter blue.
Here builds the wood-lark, here the faithful dove
Laments her lost, or woos her living love.
Secure from harm is every hallow'd nest,
The spot is sacred where true lovers rest.
To guard the Rock from each malignant sprite,
A troop of guardian spirits watch by night
Aloft in air each takes his little stand,
The neighb'ring hill is hence call'd *Fairy Land**.

* By contraction *Failand*, a hill well known in Somersetshire: not far from this is *The Bleeding Rock*, from which constantly issues a crimson current.

THE END.

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